

Strengthening the foundation of economic development in Africa: a review of the Trinitarian relationship between education, technology and productivity

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Abstract

The pursuit of economic development among nations of the world has occupied the attention of Governments, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Development Partners for quite some time. This is so because economic problems affect all in the society and so cannot be ignored. As a developing continent, Africa has been lagging behind other continents of the world in an effort to advance the desired development. This may never be unconnected with weak education and low technological base, both limits economic productivity. This paper reviewed the Trinitarian relationship between education as a factor of production and its capacity to boost technological expansion in any society. Data were generated from secondary sources, and the study was more of descriptive in approach. The paper took a deep look at the foundation of economic development in Africa with particular focus on development agenda put in place by some countries of Africa such as the MDGs and later SDGs. The authors x-rayed the structure of African economy and the drivers of African development. Before examining the Trinitarian relationship between education, technology and productivity, the authors took into consideration the obstacles to African economic development. The paper concluded with identification of visionary leadership and values re-engineering as possible ways forward that would take African continent to the college of developed nations of the world.

Keywords: economic development, trinitarian relationship, education, technology, productivity

1. Introduction

Economic problems are problems that affect all in the society, and as such, cannot be ignored. That is why the pursuit of economic development and prosperity by national governments is top-most across the globe. When economic problems emerge, people seek explanations by working at familiar events around. According to Coleman (1990) ^[4], today's economic problems are world's problems. Issues of inflation, budget deficit, unemployment, inequality, economic stagnation among others cannot be address by looking at a single nation in isolation but from the perspective of world economy. Economic problems just like the functionalist theorists belief is like a system that produces and distributes commodities in the society, and so if the system works efficiently, it gives the society what it wants and there are fewer problems. These problems are generational and intra-generational and so every member of the society across ages is affected. To avert this, the aggressive pursuit of economic development becomes a priority of national governments.

What then is economic development? This question is important so that the readers will not be left in doubt. According to Salmon Valley Business Innovation Centre (SVBIC, 2011), economic development is the development of economic wealth of countries, regions or communities for the wellbeing of their inhabitants. But from the policy stand point, economic development is "an activity that seeks to improve the economic wellbeing and quality of life of a community, by creating and/or retaining jobs and supporting and growing incomes and the tax base"

From a broader perspective, economic development is usually the focus of federal, state and local governments to improve

the standard of living of the people through the creation of jobs, the support of innovation and new ideas, the creation of high wealth, and the creation of an overall better quality of life.

Again, economic development can be defined in line with what the government is trying to accomplish. Sometimes, the objectives include building or improving infrastructure such as roads, bridges, etc.; improving an education system through new schools; enhancing the public safety through fire and police service; or introducing incentives that will encourage investors to open new businesses in a community. In other words, economic development could also be taken to mean the adoption and modification of new methods of technology and industrialized economy. From the above perspectives of economic development, the authors would like to submit that the whole essence of economic development across the globe is to realistically ensure the transformation and the modernisation of the entire sub-sectors of the society for a more meaningful, comfortable and valuable life from the rural to the urban centres.

Most often, the structure of governance across the continent has become a source of social and economic discontentment among African nations because of the agenda of rural and urban communities neglect. Consequent upon this, Olatunbosun (1975) and Ekpo (2000) noted that the living conditions of the affected remain unaffected by development efforts.

On a global scale, in an effort to advance development and set every part of the world free from the shackles of underdevelopment, the United Nations launched the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2000 which all

sovereign nations were signatory to. The year 2015 was the target for all nations to come out of the hole of underdevelopment. Due to non-commitment to the agenda, not much was achieved by many African countries. Towards the end of 2015, after a thorough appraisal of the MDGs, it was noted that many countries are far from meeting the realities of development on ground. This led to the modification and expansion of the goals to become Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This is a global agenda to transform the world to become a better, bigger and bolder global community.

Speaking on the post-2015 Global Development Agenda, President Jacob Zuma of South Africa remarked that Africa welcomes the crafting of a Post-2015 global agenda that will carry forward the unfinished business of MDGs. This will provide a framework of reference for our collective agreement on what has to be done. To achieve this, he reiterated the need for developed countries to be reliable partners to meet their commitment to development goals (Dlamini, 2016)^[8]. The Strategic Development Goals adopted in furtherance of the quest for development by all nations include:

1. Eradicate poverty
2. Zero hunger
3. Good health and well-being
4. Quality education
5. Gender equality
6. Clean water and sanitation
7. Affordable and clean energy
8. Decent Work and clean economic growth
9. Industry, innovations and infrastructure
10. Reduce inequality
11. Sustainable cities and communities
12. Responsible consumption and production
13. Climate actions
14. Life below water
15. Life on air
16. Peace, justice and strong institutions
17. Partnership for the goals

On September 25th, 2015, countries of the world agreed to set a new development agenda. This time around a more holistic one aimed at ending poverty, protection of the planet earth and ensuring economic prosperity among nations. This is the birth of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The expected target again is 15 years, that is the year 2030. The attainment of the goals necessarily requires concerted efforts of individuals, groups, governments at all levels, the private sector, the NGOs and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs).

To keep pace with the global development agenda, Nigerian government then under President Goodluck Jonathan crafted an economic master plan called Vision 20:2020, a journey meant to drive Nigeria to the top 20 largest economies in the world by the year 2020, be able to consolidate its leadership role in Africa and establishing itself as a significant player in the economic and political arena (Wikipedia, 2016)^[32].

While Nigeria adopted Vision 20:2020, Ghana too, in an effort to actualise the MDGs unfolded a Medium Term

Development Policy Thrust (MTDPT), a 10-year development plan to take into account the government and national development goals and vision. The real essence of the development policy thrust was to contribute to faster growth and development that would transform Ghana (CPED, 2007).

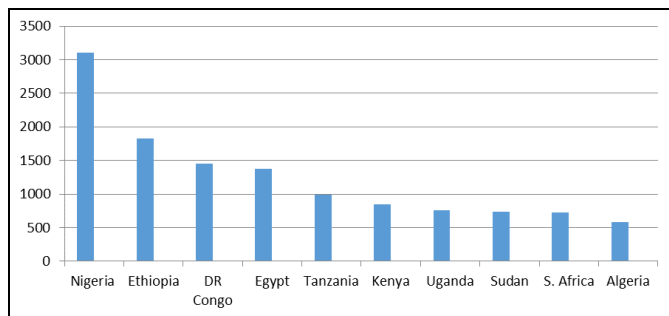
South Africa was not left out in this struggle. Using the Policy instrument of Medium Term Strategic Framework (MTSF, 2009 – 2014) as a statement of intent, this framework was meant to identify the development challenges facing South Africa and outlined the Medium Term Strategy for improving the living conditions of South Africans. The MTSF was to guide the planning and reduction of allocation across levels of governance (UNDP, 2010)^[30].

2. The Structure of African Economy

From the beginning of civilization, African continent proved to be the hub of global economy with huge human and natural resources endowment. African continent is a continent of milk and honey because of its rich resources endowment. If not because of its over exploitation by Europe and America that destroyed its huge human potential through slave trade and a long period of colonialism and subsequently imperialism, Africa should be glorified as the heart of all continents in the world. Indeed all Scholars, particularly diplomatic historians, are aware as rightly pointed out by Boateng (2005)^[3], without Africa's wealth both human and material; development in Europe and America would not be as we know it today.

As further reported by Boateng (2005)^[3], a British TV Channel 4 broadcast a documentary titled the Empire Pays Back put together by Robert Beckford, the firm estimated Britain's debt to Africans (both on the continent and in the diaspora) to be in trillions of Pounds. The question that was asked is: Is it only Britain that owes a debt to Africa and Africans? An emphatic no was the response; for every Western European nation and USA that engaged and benefited from slavery and the subsequent scramble for the partitioning of Africa indeed owes the continent and its people Zillions of Pounds. Indeed an unquantifiable debt owed African continent.

Demographically, according to the UN Economic Commission for Africa (2016)^[8], while reporting on African demographic profile, Africa's demographic dynamics are shaping the continent's present and future development agenda. This assertion is strongly supported by the fact that population is an element of national power according to international relation experts. The healthier the population of a particular country, the more bountiful the potentials therein. African demographic trend vary greatly between countries of Africa as the population is estimated to have reached 1.2 billion in 2015. Some countries, according to the report, are highly populated example Nigeria, Ethiopia, Egypt, DR Congo and Tanzania. Yet others have very small populations. See the chat below to see Africa's top population contributors.



Source: ECA, based on Department of Economic and Social Affairs data (2015).

Fig 1: Top 10 contributors to population increase in Africa between 1980-2015 as reported by UN Economic Commission for Africa 2016

The chart above reveals Nigeria at the top of Africa’s population profile followed by Ethiopia; a trend that must not be left unchecked.

The African economy is a combination of agriculture, trade, industry, human resources, less of export, gas and petroleum across the continent. Some countries are very rich in resources but the prevalence of poverty among the people has remained perceptible as inequality across groups, regions and classes has remained unabated.

According to Wikipedia (2013), Africa was identified as the poorest inhabited continent in the world whom World Bank report expect African countries to reach “middle income” status which is defined as US \$1000 per person a year by 2025 if this current growth rate continuous. Nigeria, South Africa, Libya, Egypt, Angola are the continent richest in terms of both natural resources endowment and individual richest men.

A review of these Africa’s top 10 richest men with wide spread investments is enough to show that the continent is hugely blessed even though the continent poverty level is alarming.

Table 1: Africa’s top 10 richest men

S/N	Name	US\$ worth	Country
1	Aliko Dangote	15.76	Nigeria
2	Johama Rupert	7.4b	S. Africa
3	Nicky Oppenheimer	6.7b	S. Africa
4	Christoffel Wiese	6.3b	S. Africa
5	Nassef Sawiris	6.3b	Egypt
6	Mike Adenuga	4.3b	Nigeria
7	Mohammed Mansour	4.3b	Egypt
8	Nathan Kursh	3.9b	Swaziland
9	Isabela Dos Santos	3.3b	Angola
10	Issad Rebrad	3.1b	Algeria

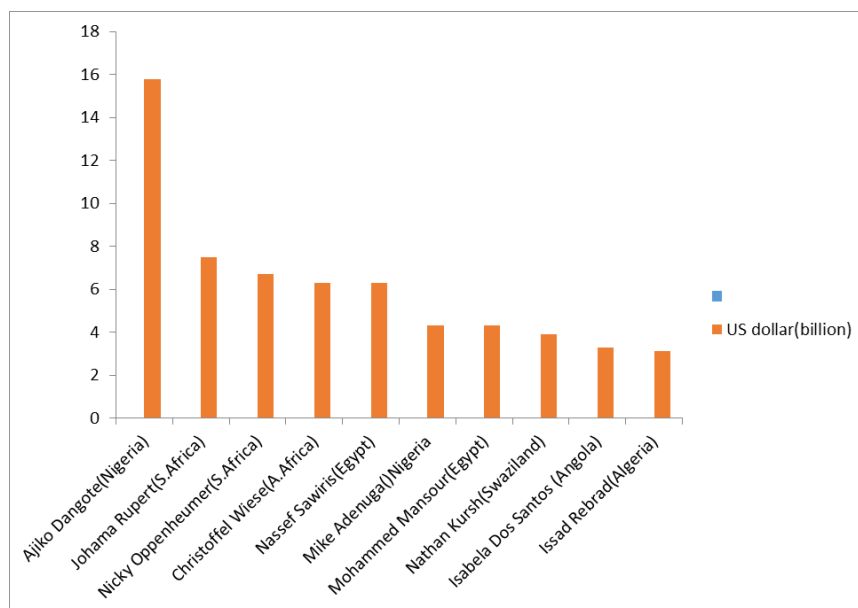


Fig 2: Africa’s top 10 richest men by country

From the perspective of natural resources distribution, some African countries are highly blessed. Look at Nigeria with high gas and oil deposit in addition to tropical rain forest, Libya, Angola, Sudan, Cameroon all rich in oil. Both South Africa and Ghana are rich in Gold. The continent is massively blessed but ironically, with such high potentials, African economic history has been a tale of woes no thanks to western imperialist policy of colonialism which subjected the continent to severe human exploitation and untimely integration of the economy into the main stream of the capitalist system.

The Economy Watch (2010) defined the African economic structure as one of the poorest in the world, characterized with multiple challenges ranging from diseases, low industrial

growth to frequent outbreaks of wars and crises. The major identified development challenges in Africa include weak education system, poor health care system, pervasive poverty and security challenges all of which must be mainstreamed into visionary African development agenda. African economy is extremely low in terms of per capita GDP ranging from US\$10,497 to US\$328

African Development Bank (2009) observed that natural resources endowment offers great opportunities for achieving high level of growth and development if properly managed. ADB noted regrettably that in the case of African rich countries with high resources, probably it is not too certain if such countries have taken full advantage of the enormous resources to stimulate economic development. To underscore

this paradox, Mabikke (2012) ^[22], in his paper on economic potentials of Africa stated thus:

Many African Countries are blessed with oil and mineral wealth that have the potentials to transform their economies. Ideally, the development of these resources can be a blessing for the entire continent. But historically, these resources have often proved to be a curse than a blessing especially to the majority of the citizens on this African continent. Partly, the cause of this curse is attributed to the leadership crisis facing many countries in the African continent (p.3)

Spot-lighting on some selected economies in Africa with high resources endowment, South African stands out as the most developed economy in Africa. According to Economy Watch, the country has well developed and properly organized service sector that contribute approximately 65.3% to the natural GDP. South Africa industrial sector contribute a significant 31.3% to the economy with agriculture sector providing self-sufficiency to the economy with 3.4% total contribution. Regrettably, unemployment rate remains high, standing at 24.8% and an inflation rate at 4.27% as at 2010. This trend must have gone much higher today owing to weak political leadership in the country with high incident of corruption.

Nigeria, on its part, is an economy dominated by oil export that has of recent stumbled beyond measures due to multiple factors of national and international dimensions. Nationally, it was due to political unrest, economic and social discrimination not forgetting pervasive corruption. Internationally, it is due to global oil price fluctuation. But prior to the discovery of oil, agriculture had been the mainstay of the economy that contributed significantly to the GDP until early 1990s, when oil was discovered. It was from that time that agriculture was relegated to the background.

3. The Drivers of African Economic Development

In addressing this section, reference will be made to one of Nigeria's economic icon and a one-time Governor of Central Bank of Nigeria, Professor Charles Soludo who in one of his public presentation on Law, Institution and Nigeria's Quest to join the First World Economy, Soludo (2006) ^[25-26] states that the secret of economic success lies in being focused on selected major ideas: "Do them right and keep doing them right for a sustained period of time." Basic things that Africa must do to claim the 21st century world include: improving governance and restoring peace and conflict prevention, investing on people, increasing competitiveness and diversifying economies, reducing aid dependence and debt, and strengthening partnership.

To Soludo, basic economic theories work well in all societies. This implies universal applicability of the forces of demand and supply. A further implication of the above is that what Soludo refers to as success factors for one country as identified above for Nigeria can be applied by all African economies to strive to claim the 21st century. From the above, it is very clear and instructive that what constitute the foundation of African economy include the following:

- Good governance/leadership
- Peace and conflict resolution
- Investment in human capacity
- Economic diversification
- Reducing aid and debt burden

- Strengthen partnership and collaboration

i) Good governance/leadership

Good governance is about the processes of making and implementing decisions. It is not about making 'correct' decisions, but about the best possible process for making those decisions (GGG, 2012). However, UNESCAP (2009) ^[31] noted that good governance is an indeterminate term used to describe how public institutions conduct public affairs and manages public resources. It entails the process of decision making and the process by which decisions are implemented or not implemented. Good governance is a broad term covering corporate, international, national, local governance or interaction between other sections of the society.

From the above definitions, the question to ask is: are African leaders governing their various states in consistent with the prescription of good governance? For us the answer can best be in the affirmative, no. There is complete absence of good governance when viewed against the basic principles that sustains it such as accountability, transparency, complied with the rule of laws, responsiveness, equitability and inclusiveness, effectiveness and efficiency and participation (GGG, 2012). There is no African country that has complied with the minimum of these requirements listed above. The culture of impunity and irresponsible governance thrive in the minds of African leaders as no one is accountable to the people who willingly mortgage their collective sovereignty to the institution of the state. Corruption and mismanagement of state resources is very common.

The surest answer to the attainment of economic prosperity among nations of the world is through responsible leadership supported by a practical and hardworking and dedicated citizenry. Visionary and exemplary leadership is the master key to meeting the requirements of good governance. Like an architect who can transform a dilapidated building into a modern architectural design, so is good leadership an instrument that breeds good governance.

Most often, those responsible for governance in Africa at whatever level have frequently abused the trust reposed on them by violating the basics principles of good governance in the exercise of their power. After all the beauty of democracy is to elect men and women of good conduct who can truly represent the people at all levels of governance. The irony of our African setting of democracy is for such elected representatives to severe contact with the electorates. This breeds mistrust and suspicion consequently leading to social, economic and political discontentment among the citizenry. This singular act goes contrary to Kukah's (2007) reference to Jeremy Bentham proposal on utility maximization thesis that argues that "in all societies, the greatest good ought to go to the greatest number of people". This utilitarian theory seems impracticable in African context of governance. The general good is maximised for the interest of few privileged persons in the corridors of power.

ii) Peace and conflict resolution

The widespread national and international crises across the sub-region have necessitated the need for greater and deeper understanding of the political, economic and social conditions that have posed pervasive peace and security challenges with far reaching implications on national development. The scourge of insecurity with cross border implications within

the Sub-Sahara Africa has constituted a deep impediment to economic development pursuit. This scourge most times is government driven especially when government lacks the political will to address the people's problems. This breeds social injustice, which according to Enu and Ugwu (2011) ^[11] is the crux of crisis in Nigeria's Niger Delta region. According to the authors, the region is contributing so much to the economic development of Nigeria but getting very little. The authors submitted that unless social justice is sustained, peace and security will continue to be elusive in the region.

Conflict resolution is a positive initiative that can bring a conducive environment for development to be achieved. For no development can be recorded in an atmosphere of uncertainty and violence. Resolving conflict therefore creates an atmosphere for ideas that breeds productivity as such provides opportunity for positive instruction among community members. Not only that, a peaceful environment enhances human capacity for independent thinking and build a culture of lasting partnership that will sustain inter and intra state initiatives.

iii) Human capital development

Human development remains the starting point of all forms of development. For nations to advance development be it economic, political, social, technological and otherwise, a substantial investment in the human profile is important. To support this, Enu (2012) ^[9], writing on entrepreneurial skills development stated that every entrepreneurship curriculum must provide training in social skills, creative problem solving, group leadership among others, which are seen as integral elements that equips students with cherished skills and capacity that make them self-sufficient and highly productive in the society. These are ingredients of human development. That is why Yesufu (2000) ^[33] observed that development means the process and result of improving the well-being of people – not a category or some categories of people, but all persons within the national economy and the totality of the citizens in a country.

The human factor is seen as the engine room of civilization and socio-economic transformation in the society and so economic development is very closely tied to human development. No wonder Kukah (2007) ^[20], writing on Religion, Culture and the Politics of Development acknowledged elaborately the work of Professor Amartya Sen, the Indian born Winner of the Nobel Prize for Economics who offered some refreshing thought on Economic Development. His central thesis was on the theory of human capabilities which stresses the capacity of the human person to evolve, achieve new heights and all that is required to make life better and fulfilling. He argues that other growth indices are important, necessary but not a condition for genuine growth. This argument underscores the importance of their investment on human capital. This Amartya put thus: "Human development has to be concerned with advancing the richness of human life rather than the richness of the economy in which human beings live which is only a part of it"

To further emphasise the importance of human factor on economic development, Taylor (2013) ^[28] state: "the confluence of rapid technological change, globalization and economic liberalization in recent years has prompted governments in developed and developing countries alike to

priorities skills development as a key strategy for economic competitiveness and growth". This prompted Enu (2012) ^[9] to state that entrepreneurship education is a re-branding education culture meant to guarantee a comprehensive educational system re-engineering arising from the obvious deficiencies of existing education system. It is meant to equip students with requisite skills and capacities needed to function in this 21st century of global competitiveness.

iv) Economic diversification

Africa is a low income continent with most countries operating a mono-economy. Export capacity is relatively low and for those blessed with cherished resources they are mismanaged by a privileged few in government. For purpose of economic development and prosperity, IMF (2015) declared that diversification in exports and in domestic production has been conducive to faster economic growth in low income countries.

The pursuit of economic diversification stems from nation's low product outputs. Diversification is important for nation's long term economic development. A diversified economy is an economy that has a number of different revenue of sources that provides the country with the capacity for sustained economic growth because it does not depend on a single revenue source. Such an economy can guarantee security, viability and prosperity. This indeed is what African countries require to be able to advance economic development and prosperity in this 21st century of global competitiveness.

v) Aids and debts reduction

Most industrialized nations of the world or richer nations grant aids to developing countries for purpose of social, economic, technological and educational advancement. For example, Cuffe (2016) ^[5] reported that in 2011, a total of \$133.5 billion which was equivalent of 0.31% of developing countries combined national income was given as aids.

Either way, aids whether in the form of loans or grants are really hurting to developing nation's economic potentials. This prompted Dambisa (2009) ^[6] to note that money from rich countries has trapped many African nations in a cycle of corruption, slower economic growth and poverty. Cutting off the flow he advised will be far more beneficial.

The burden of foreign aids under the guise of pursuit of economic development is that such aids are managed by government officials as they are misapplied against the original priorities. There are bountiful evidence to convince many that aids granted most African Countries have made the poor even poorer while growth has become slower. The debt culture, according to Dambisa (2009), has left African Countries more debt-laden, more inflation-prone, more vulnerable to the vagaries of the currency markets and even more unattractive to higher-quality investment.

Over-dependence on foreign aids has done Africa no good. Thus the IMF (2005) warned thus:

In 2005, just weeks ahead of a G8 conference that had Africa at the top of its agenda, the International Monetary Fund published a report entitled "Aid will not lift Growth in Africa". The report contained that Government, donors and campaigners should be more modest in their claims that increased aid will solve Africa's problems.

Even with the above caution, there seems to be no end in sight from African countries to end this economic trap. If the

continent is to sincerely achieve socio-economic development, a reduction in debts and aids will help developing countries to try to manage their resources prudently rather than receiving something for nothing.

Table 2: The Top 10 Most Indebted African Countries:

S/N	Country	Debt burden
1	S. Africa	137,500,000,000
2	Egypt	48,760,000,000
3	Sudan	39,700,000,000
4	Morocco	29,420,000,000
5	Tunisia	24,490,000,000
6	Angola	19,650,000,000
7	Ghana	11,230,000,000
8	Tanzania	11,180,000,000
9	Nigeria	10,100,000,000
10	Ethiopia	9,956,000,000

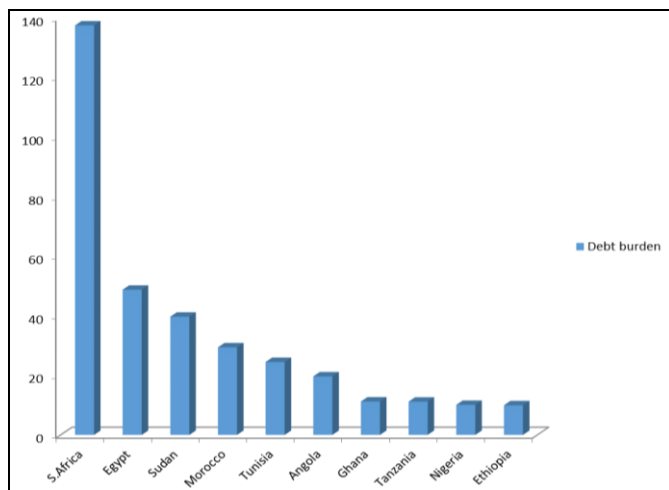


Fig 3: Debt burden in Africa to the nearest million

South Africa is the country with the highest debt burden in Africa. Even though it is an upper middle class economy, the scourge of poverty and widespread inequality is pervasive. With the above huge debt burden, all efforts towards pursuing development will be all but a distraction.

4. Education, Technology and Productivity: An Inextricable Trinitarian Relationship

This section is situated on the assumption that education, technology and productivity stimulate economic development and prosperity in every society. This assumption underscores the causal relationship between education, technology and productivity to both individuals and phenomena. Relationships are critical and considered part of human existence. Just like the doctrine of Trinity is fundamental to the Christian faith which established a formal relationship between God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, signalling a unity of purpose among three persons, so there is that inextricable bond among the concepts in the society. In this relationship, education is central and seen as the servicing platform or the mid-wife to technology, productivity and thereafter innovation as the case may be. That is why the World Bank (2005) confirmed that the most developed countries in the world – USA, Britain, Germany, France, Japan, Russia, etc. - are countries with the highest literacy rates. Similarly, the least developed countries are the

countries with the lowest literacy rates; all in African continent.

Therefore a review of this relationship should begin with the question why do nations of the world increase their investment in education? Answering this question, Manon (2010) [23] asserts that the treatment of educational investment as investment in human capital rests on the assumption that the additional education acquired by individuals will lead to an increase in their productivity, hence, record in higher earnings. No doubt, stating further that higher earnings of an educated worker will truly reflect his superior productivity. By further implication, education can be taken to be an instrument for increase productivity leading to skills development and knowledge expansion. The overall out-come of this will lead to increased efficiency.

Stressing more on the above, Manon (2010) made reference to the Neo-classical economic theory by stating thus:

Wages are determined on the basis of a worker’s marginal contribution to a firm’s revenues. Given that earnings reflect differences in marginal productivity, the additional earnings of the educated can serve as a measure of their contribution to output. Thus, the extra earnings of the educated are reflection of their higher productivity (p. 523).

The much emphasis on education and training is owed to their importance and direct impact on manpower in the process of productive employment and for economic and social development (Yesufu, 2000) [33]. There is no doubting the fact that investment in education brings higher returns to the society by promoting economic growth. Thus, according to Aghion, Boustan, Hoxby and Vandenbussche (2009) [1], spending more on educating the population will increase income sufficiently to more than recover investment. Many ways have been identified by Economists through which education affect economic development. The effect are both in the areas of private returns to the individual human capital and other externalities. In the case of highly developed countries, the most frequent area in which education impact on development is investment that fosters technological innovations reported Aghion *et al.* (2009) [1]. As a linear effect, such an investment leads to capital and labour productivity and generating of more income growth.

In another perspective, Stevens and Weale (2003) [27] writing on how education affect economic growth pointed out that there is a link between scientific advance and the way in which education has facilitated the development of knowledge. Therefore people with education earn more than those without.

Similarly, Hanushek and Wobmann (2007) [15] noted also that there is strong evidence that the cognitive skills of the population, rather than mere school enrolment, are powerfully related to individual earnings, to the distribution of income, and to economic growth in the society, and so the greater evidence to that greater school choice promotes better performance. All these are pointers to the fact that the quality of educational attainment has a significant influence on economic development and prosperity in any society.

The big question is what is the impact of technology on economic development? To answer this question, Kvochko (2013) [21] state thus:

Technology affect the economy through direct job creation, contributes to GDP growth, creation of new services and

industries, workforce transformation and business innovations. The use of technology has been linked to market place transformation, improved standard of living and more robust international trade. Technology has revolutionized virtually every industry in the economy.

In today's world of globalization where there is absolute dependence on technology, in this century of slowed growth and increased volatility, many countries are in constant search for policies that will promote economic growth and prosperity characterized with jobs creation. Given this situation, ICT is not only seen as a major breakthrough known to be the fastest growing industry providing numerous jobs. It is indeed seen as an important catalyst not just for innovation but economic development. The emergence of and dependence on ICT is to accomplish the following very important areas of needs:

- Connecting information – making information easily available for use for solution of human problems.
- Connecting people – keeping contact with all people of the world to enhance human relationship
- Connecting knowledge – knowledge is power and so its'; interconnectivity creates opportunities for innovation and invention
- Connecting intelligence – this implies broadening and improving human capacity to expand his intellectual base to enhance performance.

From the above therefore, one may be curious to ask, what is the causal linkage of all the above to economic productivity in the society? First and foremost it must be made clear that productivity is the secret of business success, economic progress, and increasing wealth (Yesufu, 2000) ^[33]. Productivity is merely the measure of the performance of an enterprise. Be it in the area of labour productivity or otherwise, the outcome which compares output to input may be positive or negative. For Okojie (1995) ^[24], if productivity is vital for the enterprise, it is equally most vital for economic development as a whole. Productivity is being acknowledged as the major source of economic development and growth as well as income. This study shows that GNP grows faster than input factors with improved productivity.

The link between productivity and education cannot be over emphasized. The more education as it is already said, the higher the productivity. That is why Hedrick-Wong (2015) ^[16] acknowledged that poor countries are poor because they suffer from generally low level of productivity as they are confined to low productive activities. What then is responsible for the low productivity base? It is simply the absence of many critical conditions that would have enabled workers to acquire new skills and then get better jobs. In this case, education is seen as an instrument to enhance labour productivity but the condition is that the said education will provide real opportunity for better skills development.

5. Obstacles to Africa Economic Development

The major obstacles to Africa economic development are both internal and external. But beyond these, and aside the fact of historical and political challenges, most of Africa's constraints to the pursuit of genuine economic development and prosperity are self-inflicted. A few of these problems are considered in this paper. The assumption is that since Africa has a common history, some of the prevailing socio-economic and political problems are applicable. These obstacles are taken to cut across the entire sub-Saharan Africa.

The obstacles are:

- Weak political leadership
- Peace and security challenges
- Weak institutional framework
- Corruption
- Low economic diversification
- Over dependence on foreign aids
- Low investment in human capital.

Weak political leadership

Despite the fact that Africa is seen as a continent of milk and honey with large endowment of human and natural resources, Africa is still the least developed continent in the world because of weak political leadership. One can rightly say that the gains of Africa's excessive blessings with natural and human resources is the loss of the continent's sincere and visionary leadership. All over Africa, there is a national question of compromised political leadership that has resulted to complete vanishing of good governance. African leadership is plague with poor management of natural resources and lack of fiscal accountability all only attest to poor leadership.

After the first generation of visionary leaders in Africa with the likes of Nnamdi Azikiwe, Obafemi Awolowo, Sir Ahmadu Bello, Herbert Macaulay, Abubaka Tafawa Balewa (Nigeria), Kwame Nkrumah & co (Ghana), Nelson Mandela (SA), Julius Nyerere (Tanzania) among others who fought for independence in their respective countries to liberate the continent from the shackles of slavery and colonialism were full of patriotism, selfless service and nationalism all were their debts to their fatherland. This is a sharp contrast to what we have today among the present generation of leaders in the continent. Today the culture of impunity is the guiding principle as leaders have become ethnic champions. The sit-tight attitude of some leaders in Africa is a severe source of economic development stagnation.

Peace and security challenges

There is hardly any country in Africa that has not experience internal civil or political strife. The continent has suffered serious peace and security challenges. From Nigeria, Libya, Sudan, Angola, Congo, Mali, Tunisia, Guinea, Somalia across, there have been development retarding occurrences which have profound implication on socio-economic development in the entire sub-Saharan Africa. If the continent must get out of the shackles of underdevelopment, the first step is the pursuit of peace and security. One is unable to understand what a President like Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe still have to offer that country after more than 4 decades in office. What about Paul Biya of Cameroon, who has ruled for about 3 decades. Such leaders are now obsessed with worries of post government life and less concerned with inspiring socio-economic development. This is very typical of African style of leadership.

Weak institutional framework

One very serious challenge of Africa continent is lack of sustainable and credible institutional framework to support governance. Government is like a system and no system works in isolation. The limited and minimal operational institutional capacity among African governments has led to the erosion or breakdown of institutional infrastructure according to Fukuyama (2013). It is indeed not an

overstatement to state that the foundations of institutional framework that support governance in Africa are weak and have led to decrease in state governance and accountability among African leaders. Because of the weak socio-economic and political institutions, it is very difficult to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). According to Dike (2008), the challenges of embarking on this economic development and prosperity are greatly hampered by lack of access to energy supply, poor governance comprised on the altar of lack of accountability and ineffective institutions. On his part, Soludo (2006) ^[26], discussing on institution and national transformation, noted that individuals make a big difference in charting the course of national leadership and society's transformation. But for sustained progress, institutions and organizations make all the difference. The author submitted that it is the institutional framework that should dictate the kind of skills and knowledge perceived to have the maximum pay-off.

Institutional quality and character significantly impact on economic development. As empirically reported, countries that have better institutional quality grow much faster and enjoy better standards of living than countries with weaker institutions. For both the political and legal institutions define the incentive system under which policy makers operate (Soludo, 2006) ^[26]. This therefore justifies why the entire continent of Africa has been lacking behind in terms of development initiatives.

Corruption

The biggest challenge facing African Countries with far reaching negative implication on economic development is the endemic, pervasive and sustained corruption. This view was corroborated by Transparency International (TI) in 2015 ranking of corruption index. TI stated that corruption is undermining development in Sub-Saharan Africa and went ahead to list South Africa as the most corrupt country in Africa. The TI listed other African countries with high profile corruption identity to include Nigeria, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Ghana. To TI, corruption creates and increases poverty and exclusion. While corrupt individuals with political power enjoy a lavish life, millions of Africans are deprived of their basic needs like food, health, education, housing, access to clean water and sanitation, it concluded (Leadership, 2015) ^[29].

It is not uncommon to see large sums of public money being shared by government officials across the continent. Take a look at Nigeria under the PDP led government. Imagine the high corruption cases President Buhari has exposed. It is indeed difficult for any county to progress economically under such as deep culture of corruption.

The high-profile corrupt practices have permeated the entire sectors of the continent. Public officials are not ashamed to embezzle public funds. Every year, the national budget is announced, half of such budget is not implemented for the common good of all. Government officials use scandalous contracts, money laundry, and fraudulent importations among other monumental channels of misappropriation to defraud the state through budget padding. This is a recent development in the 2016 budget of Nigeria, which President Mohamadu Buhari signed. The scourge of corruption has dented the public image of African leaders and African countries.

Low investment in human capital

The importance of human factor in the development process cannot be under-played at any point of a nation's struggle for development. On the strength of this significance, Yesufu (2006) remarked that where economic progress stops, decline literally begins. Investment in human capacity is not a one stop process. It is a continuous process in any formal structure.

In the case of a growing economy, as the economy advances, and thus requires that facilities be thought out, institutionalised and made available, to educate or to train or retain persons to fit into and practice the relevant professions. A developing economy is a growing complexity of craftsmanship, knowledge, skills and expertise, to which the work force, actual or potential, should be made to acquire (Yesufu, 2000) ^[33]. Investment in human capacity is a must for economic development for any society that is development oriented, most especially within the context of globalisation with a complex mode of production.

Other obstacles to African economic development include:

- Ethnicity
- Over-dependence on foreign aids
- Absence of economic diversification

6. The Way Forward

The paper deduced African economic problems in this 21st century to just two. A collective ability to address the two major challenges will take Africa to the Promised Land. The first is the loss of visionary leadership across the continent and the second is the disorientation and deterioration of values system. Once these two problems are taken care of, the socio-economic future of African countries will become prosperous.

i) Visionary leadership

All advanced and economically developed nations of the world are those countries with high quality and visionary leadership. African countries need dedicated and patriotic leaders who are governed by conscience and not looters of state resources. We know too well that the socioeconomic problems of the African continent are not peculiar to Africa alone. Other continents have passed through this stage of development but with a spirited effort, they have attained a positive height. This is why Akinyemi (2008) ^[2] said that there is nothing unique about Africa so we must not seek solutions that are often portrayed as uniquely African. There are problems that may be and will be unique to countries at a particular stage of development but not to claim as if African problems are unique and insolvable, hence, a reinvention of the wheel.

The transformation of African continent to a world class developed system is firmly in the hands of African leaders. If for any reason, African leaders have been so naïve and wallowing in the euphoria of unimaginable expectation that African hope of further development is coming from outside – from development partners and donor agencies – it is unfortunate. Agreed that such partners are ready to assist any time by providing aids, but it is the mandate of African leaders to navigate the wheel of progress. In this 21st century, and at this level of African development history, it is indeed a big shame that the continent is still grappling with the provision of basic necessities of life such as good roads,

education, hospitals, poverty reduction and inequality not to talk of economic diversification. When the citizens are denied basic facilities, and where poverty and inequality persists at all levels of life across the continent, it is quite unfortunate.

What is the purpose of leadership? What is the motive behind our call to serve humanity? This paper suggests very strongly that the call to serve should be driven by the passion to serve humanity. Leaders of African origin should adopt the Rotary style of leadership, which is established on the ideal of service. Rotary service is guided by the 4Way Test of the things we think, say or do, which are:

1. Is it the truth?
2. Is it fair to all concerned?
3. Will it build goodwill and better friendship?
4. Will it be beneficial to all concerned?

These four basic Rotary questions should be the philosophical cornerstones of every African leader, who is called to service his or her fatherland. If African leaders are driven by the passion to serve in line with the 4Way Test, then public looting, embezzlement, money laundry, dubious contracts, oil piracy, stealing of pensioners' entitlements, unemployment, pervasive poverty, insurgency, abuse of public office, injustice among others will be things of the past.

ii) Values re-engineering

Aside weak political leadership, which is traceable to the level of political culture in Africa, one fundamental, unexplored challenge that has weakened the foundation of Africa's economic development and prosperity and state of governance is the complete collapse of the national value system. The complete deterioration and disorientation of the national value system is one among the greatest undoing of the African continent in the 21st century. This singular factor manifests in so many negative dimensions. According to Otonti (2009), aside the monstrous culture of corruption, one manifestation is the vexed element of prevailing criminality with all amounts of impunity and gross unethical behaviours in our public and private lives.

National value system such as moral values, economic values, aesthetic values, religious values, political values and intellectual values in addition to culture, scientific and humanistic values are all compromised gravely under the altar of greed and sycophancy. What are values? Values are necessary building blocks in any society that represent acceptable principles or standards of behaviour of a society.

For example, in Nigeria, there are basic core values that have been weakened over the years and need to be strengthened for obvious national development (Enu & Esu, 2011) ^[10]. The author furthered that because of their compromised nature in the present Nigerian socio-economic and political context, they now constitute a serious moral problem. Such values according to NEEDS (2004) ^[13] include respect for elders, honesty and accountability, cooperation, industry, discipline, self-confidence and moral courage. Enu (2007) ^[12] again noted that moral values are compromised under the altar of greed, sycophancy, insincerity, mediocrity, corruption and official high-handedness.

On this, the paper affirmed that African challenges are behavioural and in most cases deliberate. That is why it is suggested that an actionable way forward be adopted, the use of moral persuasion and ethical reorientation. Corroborating this further, Enu and Esu (2011) ^[10] strongly noted that the

need for character and moral education in Nigerian educational institutions is quite obvious especially when viewed against growing acts of fallen moral values such as stealing, cheating, cultism, examination malpractice, sexual promiscuity among others. People should be given new orientation and be made to adopt a culture of moral integration. A paradigm shift in this direction will drive African continent to economic development and prosperity.

7. Conclusion

In this paper, much has been said about the struggle for and the structural foundation of economic development in Africa. Every nation in the world struggles to achieve the best for its citizens. While some have attained the desired development, others are still grappling to attain even the most elementary necessities of life. Those at this base of the line are countries in African continent. It is very obvious that African countries can challenge and gain admission into the college of developed economies. To achieve this, we must require sacrifice of time, talent and treasure (3Ts). The paper examined the structure of African economy and found that the structural imbalance supported by pervasive internal and external factors accounts for the continent's underdevelopment.

Beyond the above, it is the view of the author that if African countries demonstrate passion for leadership of service; if leaders are not driven by selfish interest of excessive gratification of materialism and primitive accumulation of wealth, African problems are solvable. The magical wand is in the hands of the leaders. This is because Africa is a continent highly endowed with abundant resources. Africa needs nothing but credible and visionary leadership to drive the continent to prosperity. It is high time African leaders came to the realisation that no external nation can transform the fortune of their states. They alone hold the master key to socioeconomic development. The time to do this is now.

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